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(54) **ELECTROSURGICAL PLUG FOR ENERGY
ACTIVATION OF SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS**

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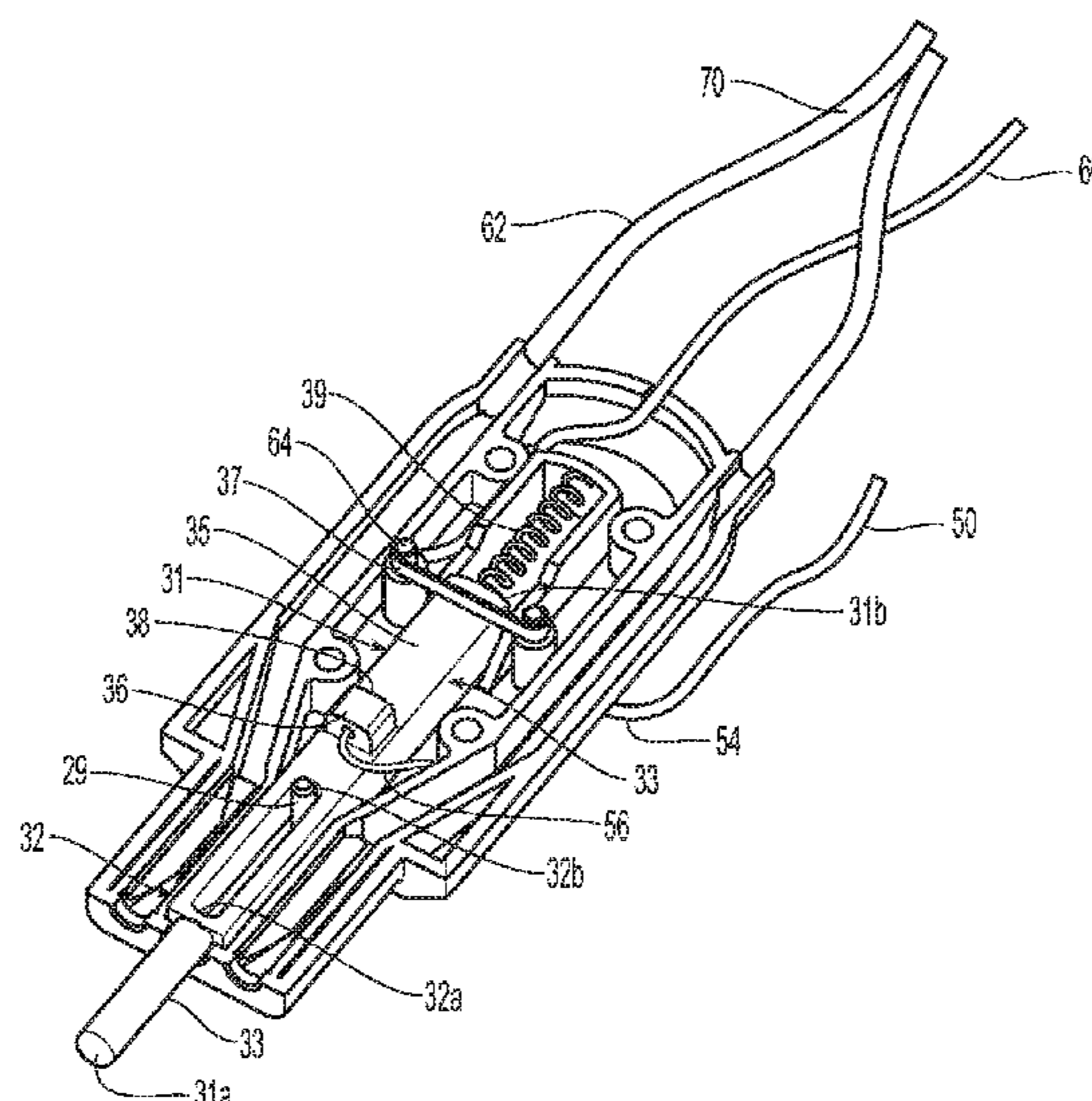
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An electrosurgical system includes an electrosurgical gener-
ator having active and return terminals, an electrosurgical
instrument including an active electrode, a return instrument
including a return electrode, an active plug configured to
connect to the active terminal of the generator, a return plug
configured to connect to the return terminal of the generator,
an active cable extending from the return plug to the electro-
surgical instrument, a return cable extending from the return
plug to the return instrument, a connector cable extending
from the active plug to the return plug, and a mechanical
switch mechanism disposed within the return plug. The
mechanical switch mechanism has a disengaged position in
which the active plug is electrically disconnected from the
active cable and an engaged position in which the active
plug is in electrical communication with the active cable.

19 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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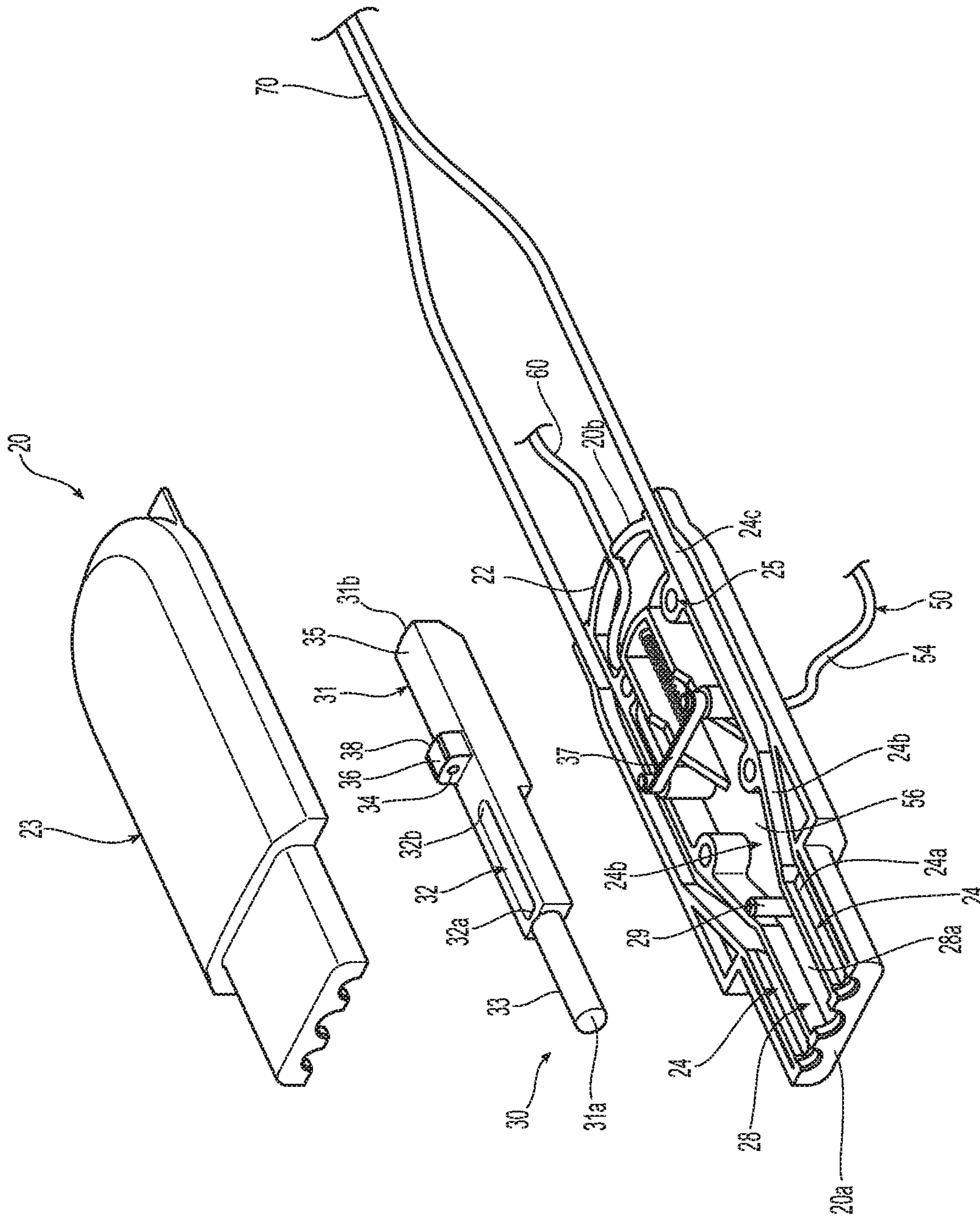


Fig. 2

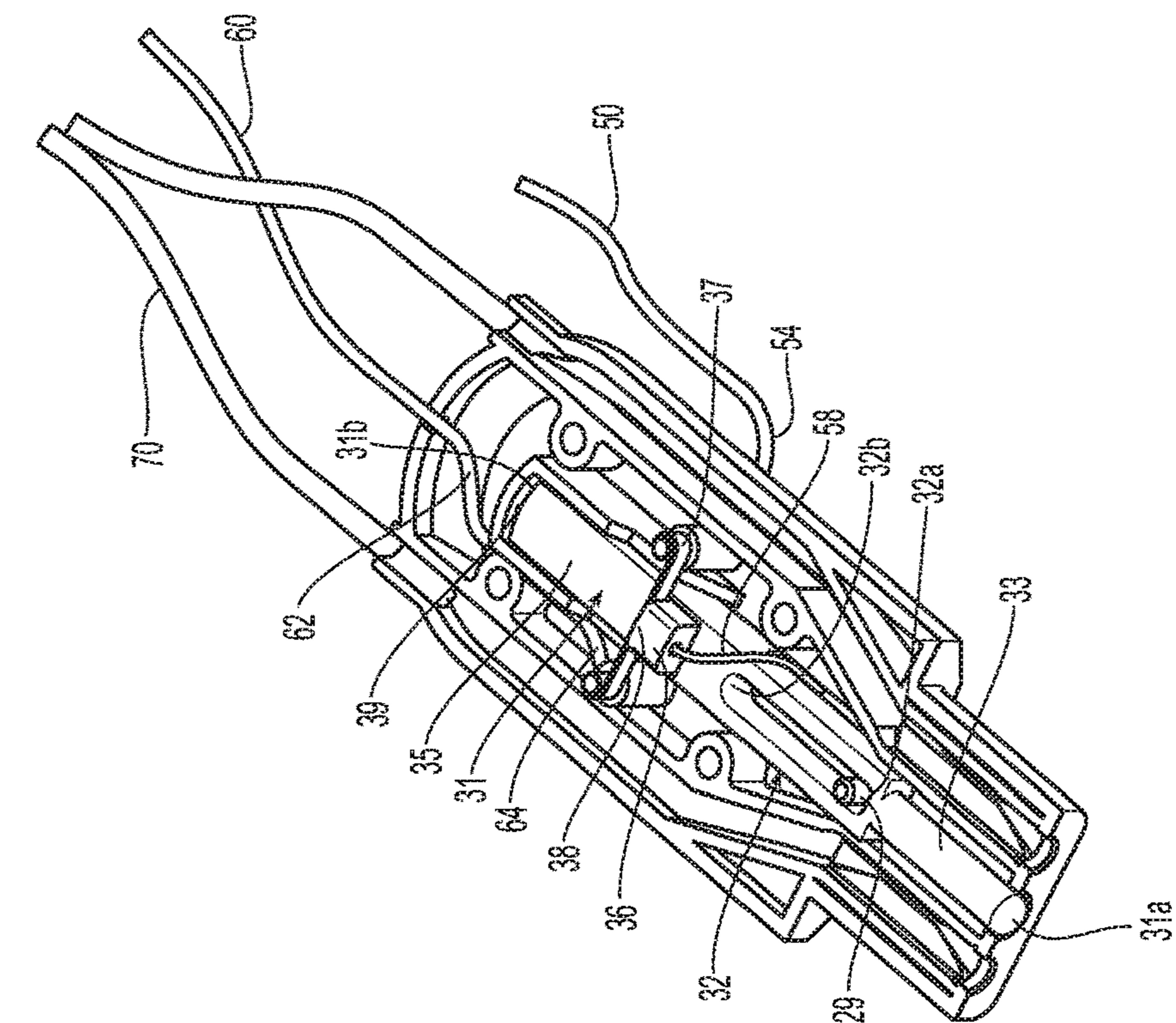


Fig. 3

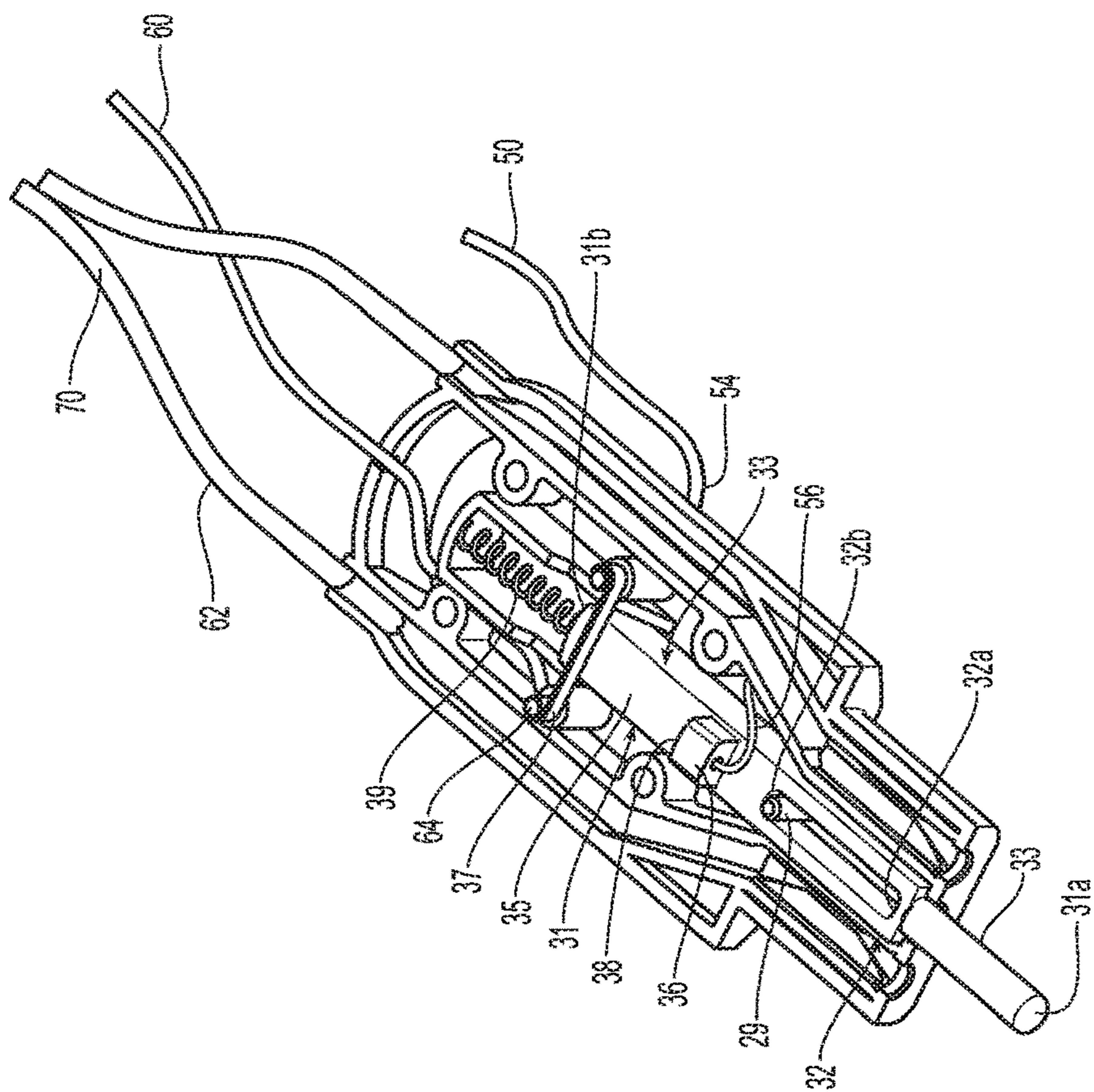


Fig. 4

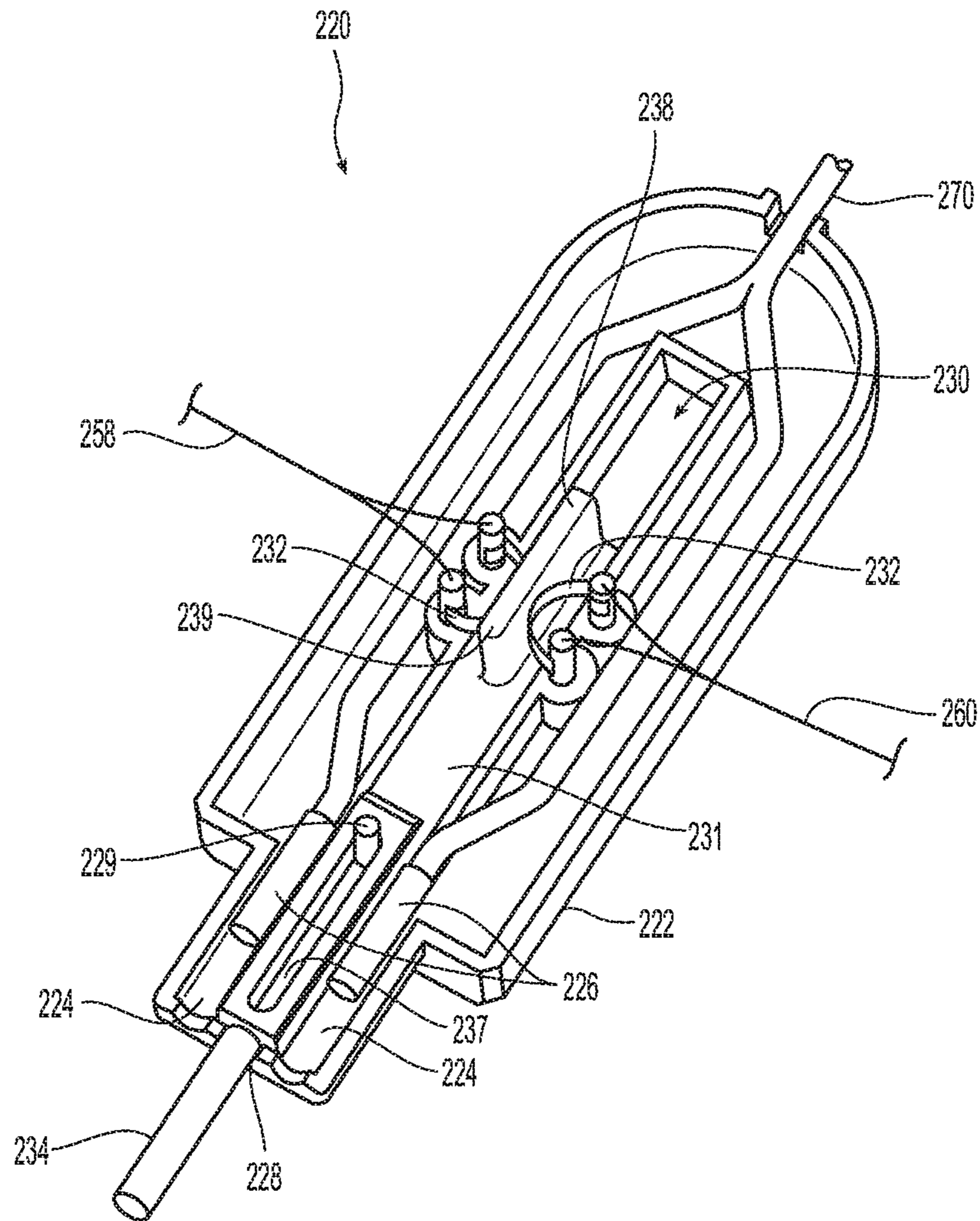


Fig. 5

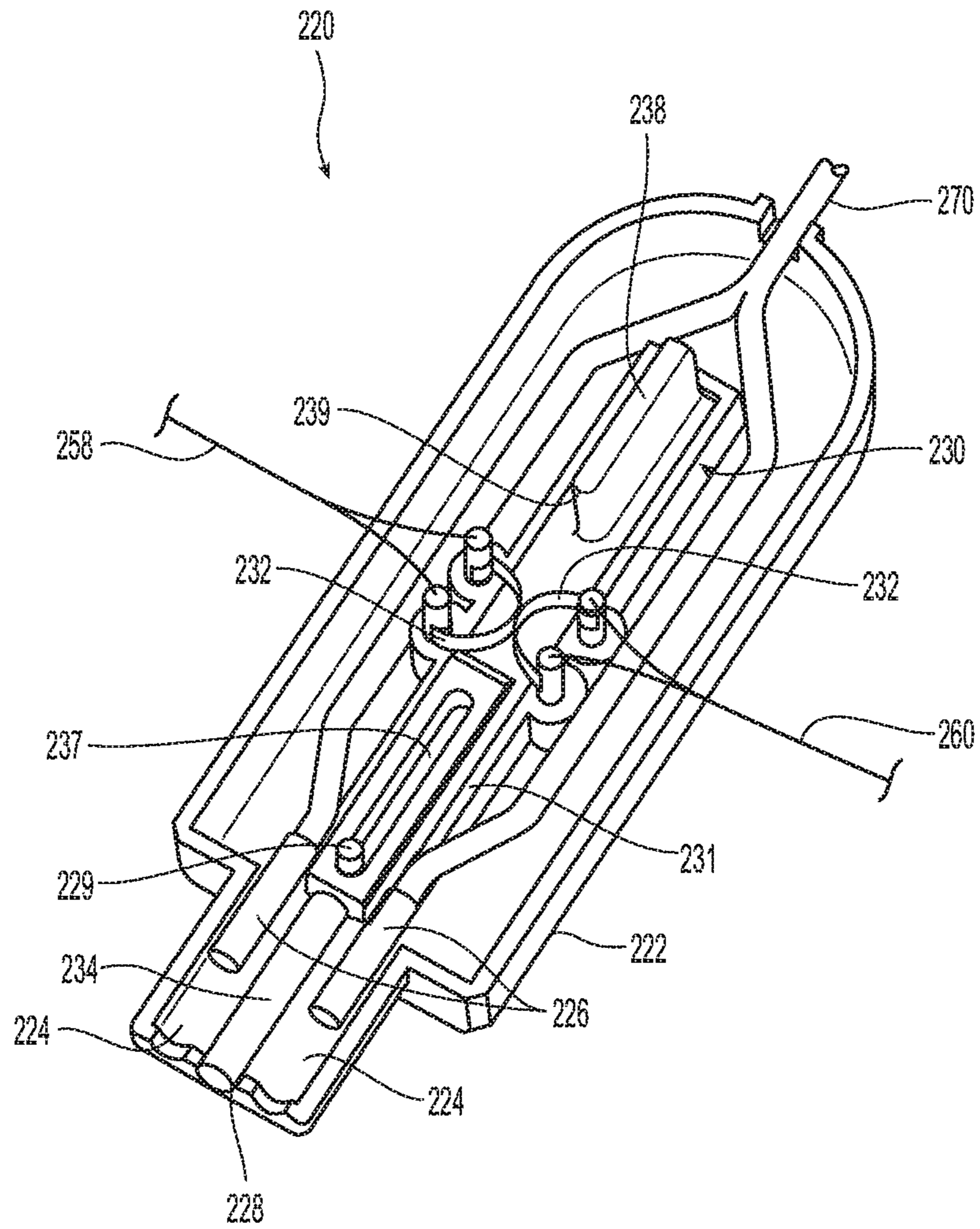


Fig. 6

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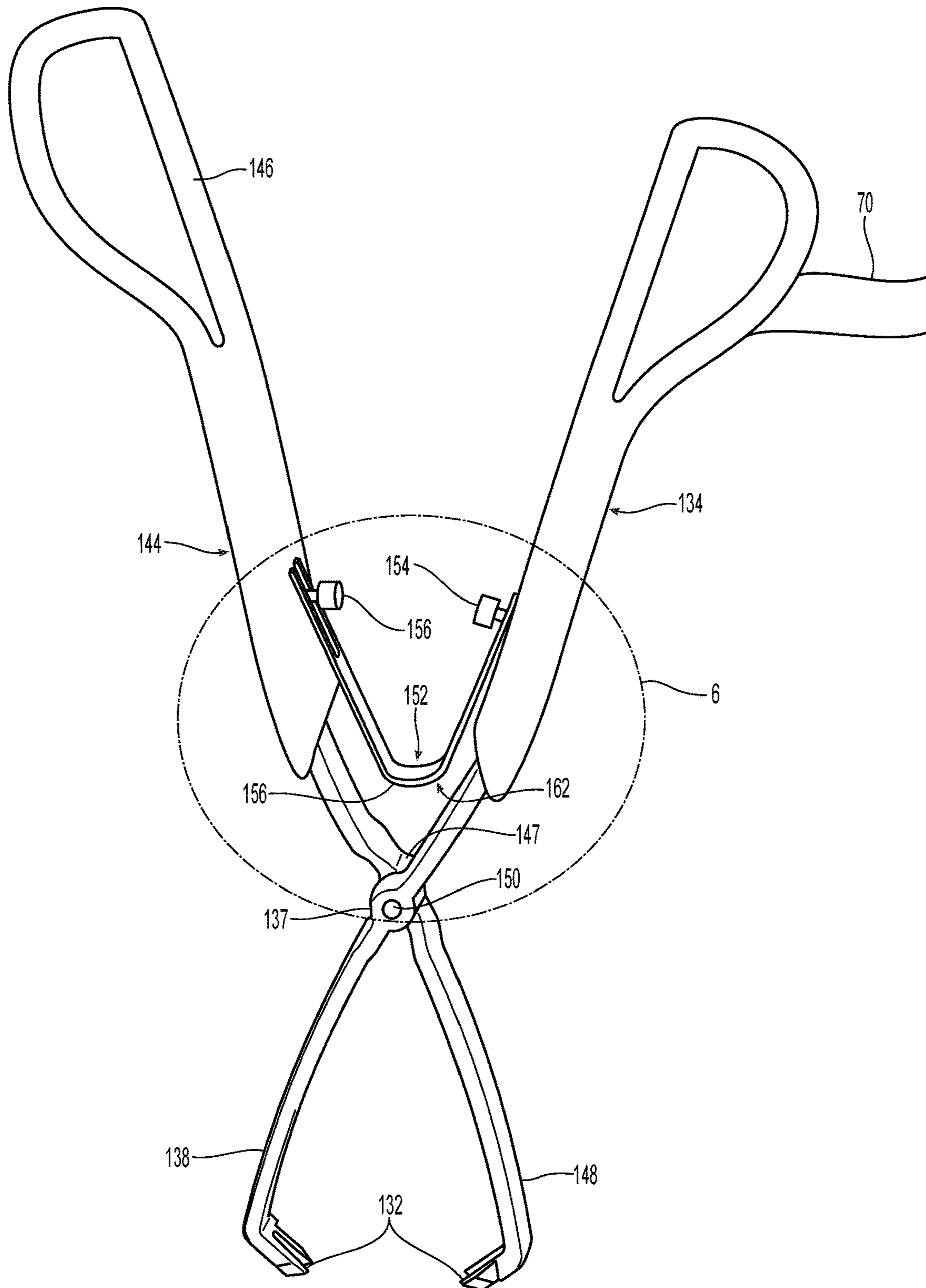


Fig. 7

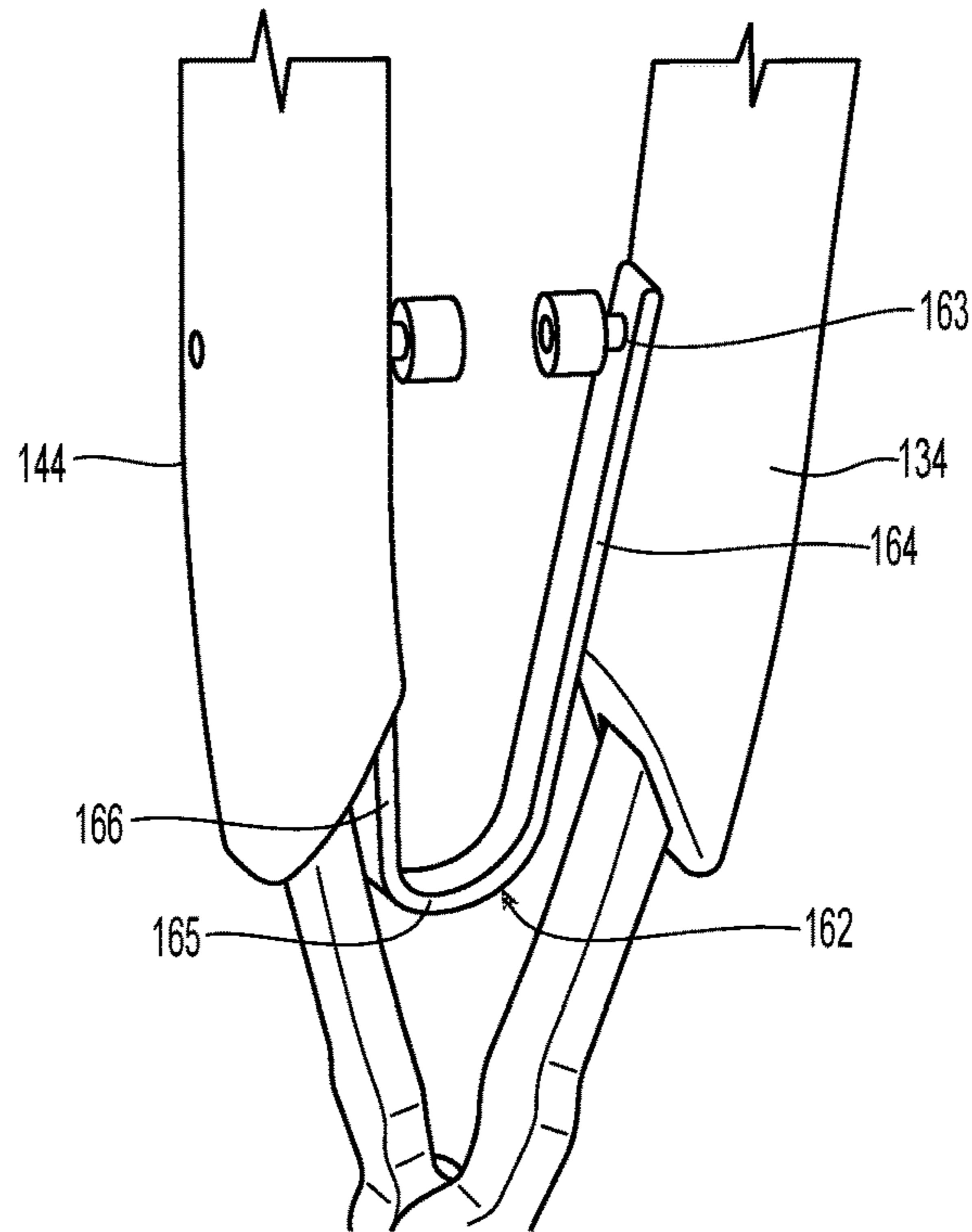


Fig. 8

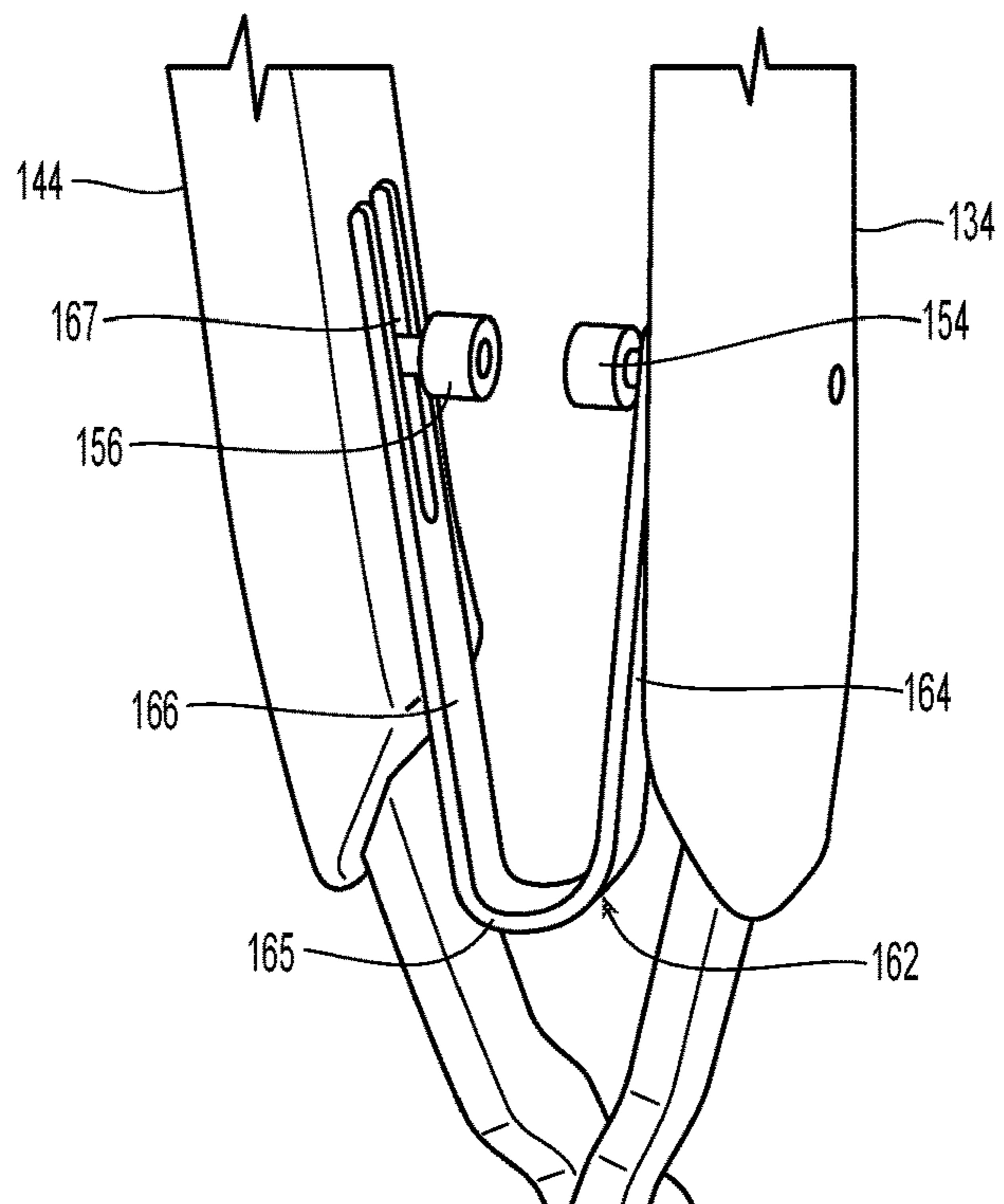


Fig. 9

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ELECTROSURGICAL PLUG FOR ENERGY ACTIVATION OF SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

The present disclosure relates to electrosurgical instruments and, more specifically, to a plug for electrosurgical instruments.

2. Discussion of Related Art

Electrosurgical devices have become widely used by surgeons. Electrosurgical devices may include monopolar hand-held instruments, e.g., pencils, which transfer radio-frequency (RF) electrical energy to a tissue site from a suitable electrosurgical generator. The electrical energy may be returned to the source via a return electrode pad positioned under a patient, or another return electrode positioned in bodily contact, with or immediately adjacent to, the surgical site. The waveforms which result from the RF electrical current may be used to produce a variety of effects such as, for example, surgical cutting, coagulation, cauterization, etc.

Electrosurgical generators include an active connector for the active electrode of the electrosurgical device and a return connector for the return electrode, e.g., the return pad or other return electrode. To ensure that electrosurgical energy takes the desired path and has the desired effect during a surgical procedure, it is important to ensure that both the electrosurgical device and the return electrode are properly connected to the electrosurgical generator before supplying energy to the active electrode.

SUMMARY

The present disclosure relates generally to a plug configured to prevent activation of the active electrode until the return electrode is properly connected to the electrosurgical generator. As used herein, the term "clinician" refers to a doctor, a nurse, or any other care provider and may include support personnel. Throughout this description, the term "proximal" refers to the portion of the device or component thereof that is closer to the clinician and the term "distal" refers to the portion of the device or component thereof that is farther from the clinician. Further, to the extent consistent, any of the aspects detailed herein may be used in conjunction with any of the other aspects detailed herein.

An electrosurgical system provided in accordance with the present disclosure includes an electrosurgical generator including an active terminal and a return terminal, an electrosurgical instrument including an active electrode, a return instrument including a return electrode, an active plug configured to connect to the active terminal of the electrosurgical generator, a return plug configured to connect to the return terminal of the electrosurgical generator to electrically couple the return electrode to the return terminal, an active cable extending from the return plug to the electrosurgical instrument and disposed in electrical communication with the active electrode, a return cable extending from the return plug to the return instrument, a connector cable extending from the active plug to the return plug, and mechanical switch mechanism disposed within the return plug. The mechanical switch mechanism has a disengaged position in which the active plug is electrically disconnected

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from the active cable and an engaged position in which the active plug is in electrical communication with the active cable.

In an aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch mechanism is in the disengaged position when the return plug is disconnected from the return terminal and is in the engaged position when the return plug is connected to the return terminal.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch mechanism includes a plunger translatable within the return plug. The plunger includes a tip portion extending from a leading end of the return plug in the disengaged position and disposed within the return plug in the engaged position.

In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the tip portion is configured to engage the return terminal as the return plug is connected to the return terminal such that engagement between the tip portion and the return terminal transitions the mechanical switch mechanism from the disengaged position to the engaged position.

In still another aspect of the present disclosure, the return plug includes a post and the plunger includes a slot defined therethrough. The post is received within the slot to limit translation of the plunger towards and away from the leading end of the return plug.

In still yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the return plug defines a plunger channel within which the plunger is slidably received.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch mechanism includes a bar conductor extending across the plunger channel that is electrically coupled to the active cable.

In still another aspect of the present disclosure, the plunger includes a protrusion having a contact on a surface facing a trailing end of the return plug. The contact is spaced apart from the bar conductor in the disengaged position and in contact with the bar conductor in the engaged position.

In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, in the engaged position, engagement between the contact and the bar conductor bends the bar conductor towards the trailing end of the return plug.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the active plug includes an active lead that extends into the return plug and is coupled to the plunger in electrical communication with the contact. The active lead may be connected to a leading surface of the protrusion opposite the contact.

In still yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch mechanism includes a biasing member disposed within the plunger channel and engaged with the plunger to urge the plunger towards the leading end of the return plug.

In an aspect of the present disclosure, the bar conductor is a leaf spring.

A return plug for an electrosurgical system provided in accordance with the present disclosure includes a mechanical switch mechanism for mechanically connecting an active lead configured to electrically connect to an active terminal of an electrosurgical generator to an active cable configured to electrically connect to an active electrode of an electrosurgical instrument when the return plug is connected to a return terminal of the electrosurgical generator and to electrically disconnect the active lead from the active cable when the return plug is not connected to the return terminal.

In an aspect of the present disclosure, the return plug includes an upper housing and a lower housing defining a pair of return channels and a plunger channel defined between the pair of return channels. Each of the return

channels extends through a leading end and a trailing end of the upper and lower housings.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch mechanism includes a plunger slidably disposed within the plunger channel. The plunger includes a slot defined therethrough configured to allow translation of the plunger between a first position in which the active lead is electrically disconnected from the active cable and a second position in which the active lead is electrically connected to the active cable. The plunger may be biased towards the first position.

Another surgical system provided in accordance with the present disclosure includes an active terminal, a return terminal, an active electrode, a return electrode, an active plug configured to connect to the active terminal, and a return plug configured to connect to the return terminal. The return plug is coupled to the return electrode and coupled between the active plug and the active electrode. The return plug is configured to break an electrical connection between the active plug and the active electrode when the return plug is not connected to the return terminal and to establish an electrical connection between the active plug and the active electrode when the return plug is connected to the return terminal.

In an aspect of the present disclosure, the system includes an electrosurgical generator including the active and return terminals.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, upon connection of the return plug with the return terminal, a mechanical switch of the return plug is actuated to establish the electrical connection between the active plug and the active electrode.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch of the return plug includes a plunger configured to bring at first contact into electrical communication with a second contact upon connection of the return plug with the return terminal to establish the electrical connection between the active plug and the active electrode.

In still another aspect of the present disclosure, the mechanical switch of the return plug includes a plunger configured to displace an interrupting structure to bring first and second contacts into electrical communication with one another upon connection of the return plug with the return terminal to establish the electrical connection between the active plug and the active electrode.

In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the first and second contacts are biased towards a contacting position such that, upon displacement of the interrupting structure, the first and second contacts are biased into contact with one another.

In still yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the first and second contacts are spring contacts.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the system further includes an active cable extending from the return plug to the active electrode, a return cable extending from the return plug to the return electrode, and a connector cable extending from the active plug to the return plug.

In yet another aspect of the present disclosure, the active electrode forms part of a monopolar pencil. Additionally or alternatively, the return electrode forms part of a return tenaculum.

A surgical device provided in accordance with the present disclosure includes a first arm having a proximal handle portion, a distal grasping portion, and a pivot portion positioned between the handle portion and the grasping portion. The surgical device further includes a second arm having a proximal handle portion, a distal grasping portion, and a pivot portion positioned between the handle portion and the

grasping portion. The first and second arms are pivotally coupled to one another at the pivot portions such that as the handle portions move towards one another the grasping portions move towards one another. An opening mechanism is disposed between the handle portions, and includes a first portion secured to the handle portion of the first arm, a second portion slidably secured to the handle portion of the second arm, and a central portion interconnecting the first and second portions. The central portion is positioned adjacent the pivot portions and configured to urge the first and second portions apart from one another.

In an aspect of the present disclosure, the second portion includes a slot defined in a longitudinal direction of the second arm. The slot is configured to receive a fastener configured to secure the second portion to the second arm. The fastener has a locked configuration in which the second portion is fixed to the second arm and the handle portions of the first and second arms are fixed relative to one another.

In another aspect of the present disclosure, the first arm includes a return cable that is in electrical communication with the grasping portions of the first and second arms. The grasping portions are configured to function as return electrodes for a monopolar electrosurgical device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Various aspects and features of the present disclosure are described hereinbelow with reference to the drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, wherein like reference numerals designate identical or corresponding elements in each of the several views.

FIG. 1 is a schematic illustration of an exemplary electrosurgical system provided in accordance with the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view, with parts separated, of a plug of the electrosurgical system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view with a top cover removed showing the internals of the plug of FIG. 2 in a disengaged configuration;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view with a top cover removed showing the internals of the plug of FIG. 2 in an engaged configuration;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view with a top cover removed showing the internals of another plug in accordance with the present disclosure configured for use with the electrosurgical system of FIG. 1, wherein the plug is disposed in a disengaged configuration;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view with a top cover removed showing the internals of the plug of FIG. 5, wherein the plug is disposed in a disengaged configuration;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a return device of the electrosurgical system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged perspective view of a portion of the return device as indicated in FIG. 7; and

FIG. 9 is another enlarged perspective view of a portion of the return device as indicated in FIG. 7.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to FIG. 1, an electrosurgical system 1 is provided in accordance with the present disclosure and includes an electrosurgical generator 110, an electrosurgical device 120, a return device 130, and a cable system 40. The electrosurgical generator 110 is configured to provide electrosurgical energy for treating tissue and includes an active terminal 112 and a return terminal 116. The active terminal

112 includes one or more receptacles **114** and the return terminal **116** includes one or more prongs **118** for electrically coupling to the electrosurgical generator, although other configurations are also contemplated, e.g., wherein the active terminal **112** additionally or alternatively includes prongs and/or the return terminal **116** additionally or alternatively includes receptacles.

The electrosurgical device **120** may be configured as a monopolar device, e.g., a pencil, and includes an active electrode **122** that is configured to deliver electrosurgical energy to tissue. The return device **130** includes a return electrode **132** configured to provide a return path for electrosurgical energy delivered by the active electrode **122** to return to the electrosurgical generator **110**, thus defining a monopolar surgical system although bipolar configurations are also contemplated. As shown, the return device **130** is configured as a tenaculum that is insertable into a surgical site adjacent the electrosurgical device **120** and the active electrode **122** thereof. In some embodiments, the return device **130** may be a return pad that is in contact with a portion of the skin of the patient or may be a return electrode in contact with the skin of the patient adjacent a surgical site.

The cable system **40** is configured to electrically couple the active and return electrodes **122**, **132** to the electrosurgical generator **110**. The cable system **40** includes a return plug **20**, an active plug **50**, an active cable **60**, and a return cable **70**. The active plug **50** is complementary to the active terminal **112** of the electrosurgical generator **110**, e.g., the active plug **50** includes one or more prongs **52** that are configured to be received within the receptacles **114** of the active terminal **112** of the electrosurgical generator **110**. The active plug **50** is connected to the return plug **20** via a connector cable **58** and indirectly coupled to the electrosurgical device **120** thereby, as detailed below. Thus, the active plug **50** is not directly connected to the electrosurgical device **120**.

The active cable **60** extends between and interconnects the return plug **20** and the electrosurgical device **120**. The active cable **60** may be integrally connected with the return plug **20** and/or the electrosurgical device **120** or the active cable **60** may be releaseably connected to the return plug **20** and/or the electrosurgical device **120**. For example, the active cable **60** may have a plug (not shown) and the return plug **20** may include a receptacle (not shown) for receiving the plug, or vice versa, to electrically couple the active cable **60** to the return plug **20**.

The return cable **70** extends from the return plug **20** to the return device **130**. The return cable **70** is integrally connected with the return plug **20** and the return device **130** such that the return cable **70** is non-removable from both the return plug **20** and the return device **130**. Integrally connecting the return cable **70** with the return plug **20** and the return device **130** requires the return electrode **132** to be in electrical communication with the electrosurgical generator **110** during delivery of electrosurgical energy to the active electrode **122**, as detailed below.

With additional reference to FIG. 2, the return plug **20** includes a mechanical switch mechanism **30** to electrically couple the active plug **50** with the active cable **60** when the return plug **20** is connected to the return terminal **116** of the electrosurgical generator **110** such that electrosurgical energy can be delivered to tissue by the active electrode **122**. The mechanical switch mechanism **30** prevents delivery of electrosurgical energy to the active electrode **122** when the return plug **20** is not connected to the return terminal **116**.

The return plug **20** has a leading end **20a** that is closer to the electrosurgical generator **110** when the return plug **20** is

connected to the return terminal **116** and a trailing end **20b** opposite the leading end **20a** that is further away from the electrosurgical generator **110** when the return plug **20** is connected to the return terminal **116**. The return plug **20** has a housing formed of a first or lower housing **22** and a second or upper housing **23**. The upper and lower housings **22**, **23** have a connection system **25** for aligning and securing the upper and lower housings **22**, **23** together. As shown, the lower housing **22** includes one or more openings that receive posts of the upper housing **23** such that when the posts are received within the openings, the upper and lower housings **22**, **23** are aligned with and secured to one another. Other connection mechanisms are also contemplated.

The upper and lower housings **22**, **23** together define two return channels **24** and a plunger channel **28** positioned between the return channels **24**. Each channel **24**, **28** is open at the leading end **20a** of the upper and lower housings **22**, **23**. Each return channel **24** is configured to receive a portion of the return cable **70** therein. Each return channel **24** may be configured to have an interference fit with the portion of the return cable **70** to prevent the return cable **70** from withdrawing from the return plug **20**. Additionally or alternatively, each return channel **24** may include a suitable shape or other feature(s) to prevent the portion of the return cable **70** from withdrawing from the return plug **20**.

Each return channel **24** includes a leading portion **24a**, a transverse portion **24b**, and a trailing portion **24c**. Each leading portion **24a** extends from the leading end **20a** in a direction parallel to the other leading portion **24a**. Each transverse portion **24b** extends from one of the leading portions **24a** and away from the other transverse portion **24b** such that trailing ends of the transverse portions **24b** are spaced apart from one another a greater distance than leading ends of the transverse portions **24b**. Each trailing portion **24c** extends from one of the transverse portions **24b** through the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **70** in a direction parallel to the other.

The plunger channel **28** is positioned between the return channels **24** and extends from the leading end **20a** of the return plug **70** towards the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **70** in a direction parallel to the leading portions **24a** and the trailing portions **24b** of the return channels **24**. The plunger channel **28** includes a leading portion **28a**, a central portion **28b**, and a trailing portion **28c**. The leading portion **28a** extends from the leading end **20a** of the return plug **70** and is limited in the transverse directions by lateral walls. The trailing portion **28c** is positioned between the central portion **28b** and the trailing end **20c** of the housing. The trailing portion **28c** is defined in the transverse directions by lateral walls and in a longitudinal direction by a trailing wall that defines a distal end of the trailing portion **28c**. The central portion **28b** is positioned between the leading portion **28a** and the trailing portion **28c** and has a post **29** extending from the lower housing **22** towards the upper housing **23** at a leading end thereof and a bar conductor **37** extending between the lateral walls defining the trailing portion **28c** at a trailing end thereof. The central portion **28b** may extend laterally to walls defining the return channels **24**.

With additional reference to FIG. 3, the plunger channel **28** receives the mechanical switch mechanism **30** therein. The switch mechanism **30** includes a plunger **31**, the bar conductor **37**, and a biasing member **39**. The plunger **31** is disposed within the plunger channel **28** and is translatable in a direction extending between the leading and trailing ends **20a**, **20b** of the housing. The biasing member **39** is disposed

within the trailing portion **28c** of the plunger channel **28** and is configured to urge the plunger **31** towards the leading end **20a** of the return plug **70**.

With particular reference to FIG. 2, the plunger **31** includes a body having, from a leading tip **31a** to a trailing end **31b**, a tip portion **33**, a trailing portion **35**, and a slot **32** defined therebetween. The slot **32** is configured to slidably receive the post **29** therein and includes a leading stop **32a** and a trailing stop **32b**. The post **29** limits translation of the plunger **31** between a disengaged position in which the tip portion **33** extends or further extends from the leading end **20a** of the return plug **70** as shown in FIG. 3 and an engaged position in which the tip portion **33** is disposed substantially within or more-retracted within the leading portion **28a** of the plunger channel **38** as shown in FIG. 4. In the disengaged position the post **29** may contact the trailing stop **32b** of the slot **32** and in the engaged position the post **29** may contact the leading stop **32a** of the slot **32**.

The trailing portion **35** of the plunger **31** includes a protrusion **36** extending from an upper surface of the trailing portion **35** facing the upper housing **23**, an active connector **34** adjacent the trailing stop **32b** of the slot **32**, and a contact **38** on a surface of the protrusion **36** facing the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **70**. The active connector **34** may be positioned within the slot **32**, may be on or in a lower surface of the plunger **31** facing the lower housing **22**, or may be on or in a side surface of the plunger **31** facing one of the return channels **24**. The active connector **34** extends through the body of the plunger **31** and is electrically coupled to the contact **38**. The active connector **34** may pass through a portion of the protrusion **36**.

With continued reference to FIGS. 2 and 3, the active wire **54** of the active plug **50** includes a link **56** that extends into the interior of the return plug **70**. The link **56** may pass through the lower housing **22**, the upper housing **23**, or therebetween, to enter the interior of the return plug **70**. The link **56** is coupled to the active connector **34** of the plunger **31** such that the prongs **52** (FIG. 1) of the active plug **50** are in electrical communication with the contact **38** of the plunger **31**.

The lead **62** of the active cable **60** includes a link **64** that extends into the interior of the return plug **70**. The link **64** may pass through the trailing end **20b** of the upper or lower housing **22**, **23** to enter the interior of the return plug **70**. In some embodiments, the link **64** passes through the upper or lower surface of the upper or lower housing **22**, **23** respectively. The link **64** is coupled to the bar conductor **37** such that the active electrode **122** (FIG. 1) of the electro-surgical instrument **120** is in electrical communication with the bar conductor **37**. As shown, the link **64** may pass between one of the return channels **24** and the plunger channel **28** to couple to the bar conductor **37**. In some embodiments, the link **64** may pass through the wall defining the trailing end of the plunger channel **28** to couple to the bar conductor **37**. The bar conductor **37** is secured between the upper and lower housings **22**, **23** with each end portion of the bar conductor **37** longitudinally and laterally fixed within the return plug **70**. The bar conductor **37** has a conductive outer surface and may be formed of an entirely conductive material. The bar conductor **37** may be flexible and/or may be elastic. In some embodiments, the bar conductor **37** is a leaf spring such that the bar conductor **37** cooperates with the biasing member **39** to urge the plunger **31** towards the leading end **20a** of the return plug **70** when contacted by the contact **38** as detailed below.

Referring to FIG. 3, in the disengaged position, the biasing member **39** urges the plunger **31** towards the leading

end **20a** of the return plug **20** such that the tip portion **33** extends from the leading end **20a**. When the plunger **31** is in the disengaged position, the contact **38** is spaced apart from the bar conductor **37** such that there is no electrical communication between the prongs **52** (FIG. 1) of the active plug **50** and the active electrode **122** (FIG. 1) of the electro-surgical instrument **120**. The slot **32** of the plunger **31** is sized such that in the disengaged position, the distance between the contact **38** and the bar conductor **37** is large enough to prevent any electrical communication or coupling therebetween.

With reference to FIG. 4, in the engaged position, the plunger **31** is translated towards the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **70** against the biasing member **39** such that the contact **38** contacts the bar conductor **37** to electrically couple the prongs **52** (FIG. 1) of the active plug **50** with the active electrode **122** (FIG. 1) of the electro-surgical instrument **120**. The plunger **31** may be translated towards the trailing end **20b** such that the contact **38** bends or flexes a portion of the bar conductor **37** towards the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **70**. The flexing of the bar conductor **37** may increase a contact area between the contact **38** and the bar conductor **37** as the bar conductor **37** bends around the protrusion **36**.

Referring to FIGS. 1-4, the use of the electro-surgical system **1** is detailed. Initially, the active plug **50** is connected to the electro-surgical generator **110** such that the prongs **52** are received within the receptacles **114** of the active terminal **112**. As detailed above, when the prongs **52** are received within the receptacles **114**, the active plug **50** is in electrical communication with the active terminal **112** of the electro-surgical generator **110**. With the active plug **50** connected to the electro-surgical generator **110** and the return plug **20** disconnected, the active electrode **122** is out of electrical communication with the active terminal **112** of the electro-surgical generator **110** as a result of the switch mechanism **30** being in the disengaged position when the return plug **20** is disconnected from the return terminal **116**.

With the active plug **50** connected to the electro-surgical generator **110**, the return plug **20** is connected to the return terminal **116** of the electro-surgical generator **110**. To connect the return plug **20**, the return prongs **118** of the return terminal **116** are received within the return channels **24** of the return plug **20**. As the return prongs **118** are received within the return channels **24**, the tip portion **33** of the plunger **31** engages return terminal **116** to translate the plunger **31** of the switch mechanism **30** from the disengaged position towards the trailing end **20b** of the return plug **20** as the return prongs **118** are received within the return channels **24** to translate the plunger **31** of the switch mechanism **30** to the engaged position such that the contact **38** is in electrical communication with the bar conductor **37**.

As detailed above, when the switch mechanism **30** is in the engaged position and the active plug **50** is connected to the active terminal **112** of the electro-surgical generator **110**, the active electrode **122** is in electrical communication with the active terminal **112**. With the active electrode **122** in electrical communication with the active terminal **112**, the electro-surgical instrument **120** can be used to deliver electro-surgical energy to tissue using the active electrode **122** which is returned to the electro-surgical generator **110** via the return device **130**. The return device **130** may be positioned within a surgical site adjacent the active electrode **120** or may be a return pad in contact with the skin of the patient. In addition, if the return plug **20** comes loose or is disconnected from the return terminal **116**, the biasing member **139** translates the plunger **31** towards the leading end **20a** of the

return plug 20 such that the contact 38 breaks the connection with the bar conductor 37 such that the electrical communication between the active electrode 122 and the active terminal 112 is broken. As a result, delivery of electrosurgical energy from the electrosurgical generator 110 is prevented if the return plug 20 is not re-connected to the return terminal 116.

Referring to FIGS. 5 and 6, another embodiment of a return plug 220 configured for use with electrosurgical system 1 (FIG. 1) or any other suitable electrosurgical system is shown. With additional reference to FIG. 1, the return plug 220 includes a mechanical switch mechanism 230 to electrically couple the active plug 50 with the active cable 60 when the return plug 220 is connected to the return terminal 116 of the electro surgical generator 110 such that electrosurgical energy can be delivered to tissue by the active electrode 122, similarly as detailed above with respect to return plug 20. The mechanical switch mechanism 230 prevents delivery of electrosurgical energy to the active electrode 122 when the return plug 220 is not connected to the return terminal 116, also similarly as detailed above with respect to return plug 20. As the function of return plug 220 as part of electrosurgical system 1 is similar to that of return plug 20, only the differences between return plug 220 and return plug 20 are described in detailed hereinbelow, while similarities are summarily described or omitted entirely.

Continuing with reference to FIGS. 5 and 6, return plug 220 has a housing 222 formed of a lower housing and an upper housing (the upper housing is removed in FIGS. 5 and 6 to illustrate the internal features of return plug 220). Housing 222 defines two return channels 224 and a plunger channel 228 positioned between the return channels 224. A portion of the return cable 270 is received within each of the return channels 224, terminating at respective contacts 226 disposed within the return channels 224. Return channels 224 are configured to receive return prongs 118 of return terminal 116 of electrosurgical generator 110 (see FIG. 1) to thereby electrically connect return terminal 116 (FIG. 1) with contacts 226 and, thus, return cable 270, thereby ultimately connecting return terminal 116 and return device 130 with one another (see FIG. 1). Plunger channel 228, as noted above, is positioned between the return channels 224 and slidably receives a plunger 231 of the mechanical switch mechanism 230.

The mechanical switch mechanism 230 includes plunger 231 and a pair of spring contacts 232 mounted within housing 222 and disposed on either side of the plunger 231. One of the spring contacts 232 is electrically coupled to the electrosurgical device 120 (FIG. 1) via an active cable 260 while the other spring contact 232 is electrically coupled to the active plug 50 (FIG. 1) via a connector cable 258. In this manner, when spring contacts 232 are disconnected from one another, energy is inhibited from being supplied to the electrosurgical device 120 (FIG. 1) even when the active plug 50 (FIG. 1) is connected to the electrosurgical generator 110 (FIG. 1). Once spring contacts 232 are connected with one another, thereby connecting connector cable 258 and active cable 260, energy may be supplied from the electro surgical generator 110 (FIG. 1) to the electrosurgical device 120 (FIG. 1) provided the active plug 50 (FIG. 1) is coupled to the electrosurgical generator 110 (FIG. 1). Spring contacts 232 are biased towards one another to a contacting, connected configuration such that, in the absence of an interrupting structure disposed between spring contacts 232, spring contacts 232 are electrically coupled with one another (and, thus, connector cable 258 and active cable 260 are electrically coupled with one another). In the biased position

of spring contacts 232, each spring contact 232 may define a semi-circular configuration wherein the convex outer surfaces thereof abut one another to establish the electrical communication therebetween. Spring contacts 232 may be configured as flat springs formed from sheets of strips of electrically-conductive material, as shown, or may define any other suitable configuration.

Plunger 231 includes a proximal head portion 234, a body portion 236 defining a slot 237, and a distal fin portion 238 that is at least partially formed from and/or coated with an electrically insulative material. A peg 229 of housing 222 extends into plunger channel 228 and is received within slot 237 of body 236 of plunger 231 to limit plunger 231 to a range of longitudinal motion through plunger channel 238 between an extended position (FIG. 5) and a retracted position (FIG. 6).

In the extended position of plunger 231 (FIG. 5), proximal head portion 234 of plunger 231 extends proximally from plunger channel 228 to protrude proximally from housing 222, and distal fin portion 238 is interdisposed between spring contacts 232, thereby acting as an interrupting structure maintaining spring contacts 232 in a disconnected configuration. As noted above, distal fin portion 238 is at least partially formed from and/or coated with an electrically insulative material to inhibit indirect electrical communication between spring contacts 232 via distal fin portion 238.

In the retracted position of plunger 231 (FIG. 6), on the other hand, proximal head portion 234 of plunger 231 is retracted at least partially (in some embodiments, fully) into plunger channel 228 and distal fin portion 238 is distally-spaced from spring contacts 232, thereby allowing spring contacts 232 to return under their bias into contact and, thus, electrical communication, with one another. Plunger 231 may be biased towards the extended position (FIG. 5) such that, in the absence of sufficient urging of proximal head portion 234 of plunger 231 towards the retracted position, spring contacts 232 are disconnected from each other.

Referring to FIGS. 1, 5, and 6, in use, the active plug 50 is connected to the electrosurgical generator 110. With the active plug 50 connected to the electrosurgical generator 110 and the return plug 220 still disconnected, the active electrode 122 is out of electrical communication with the active terminal 112 of the electrosurgical generator 110 as a result of the switch mechanism 230 being in the disengaged position (and, thus, the spring contacts 232 disconnected; see FIG. 5).

The return plug 220 is connected to the return terminal 116 of the electrosurgical generator 110 by inserting the return plug 220 into the return terminal 116 such that the return prongs 118 of the return terminal 116 are received within the return channels 224 of the return plug 220 and contact the respective contacts 226 disposed therein, thereby electrically coupling the return terminal 116 with the return cable 270. As the return prongs 118 are received within the return channels 224, proximal head portion 234 of plunger 231 engages return terminal 116 (or other structure associated with the electrosurgical generator 110) to urge the plunger 231 from the extended position to the retracted position. Thus, plunger 231 is retracted at least partially (in some embodiments, fully) into plunger channel 228 whereby distal fin portion 238 is distally-spaced from spring contacts 232. As distal fin portion 238 is displaced from between spring contacts 232, spring contacts 232 return under their bias into contact and, thus, electrical communication, with one another (see FIG. 6) to electrically couple the active electrode 122 with the active terminal 112 of the electrosurgical generator 110.

When the return plug 220 is removed from the return terminal 116, the plunger 231 is returned to the extended position (FIG. 5), whereby distal fin portion 238 separates and extends between spring contacts 232, disconnecting spring contacts 232 from one another, thereby disconnecting the active electrode 122 from the active terminal 112. To this end, distal fin portion 238 may include a tapered proximal end 239 to facilitate urging spring contacts 232 apart from one another and positioning of distal fin portion 238 therebetween as plunger 231 moves from the retracted position (FIG. 6) to the extended position (FIG. 5).

With reference to FIG. 7, an embodiment of the return device 130 is described in accordance with the present disclosure. The return device 130 includes a first arm 134 and a second arm 144 that are pivotally coupled to one another by a pivot pin 150. Specifically, the first arm 134 includes a proximal handle portion 136 and a distal grasper portion 138 with a pivot portion 137 positioned between the proximal handle portion 136 and the distal grasper portion 138. Similarly, the second arm 144 includes a proximal handle portion 146 and a distal grasper portion 148 with a pivot portion 147 positioned between the proximal handle portion 146 and the distal grasper portion 138. The proximal handle portions 136, 146 are coated with or formed of an insulative material to isolate a clinician using the return device 130 from an electrical energy of the grasper portions 138, 148. A portion of each grasper portion 138, 148 and/or the pivot portions 137, 147 may be formed of or coated with a conductive material to act as a return electrode 132 as detailed above. One or both of the grasper portions 138, 148 may be in electrical communication with the return cable 70 that is connected to one of the arms, e.g., the first arm 134 as shown. The return cable 70 may be connected to the first arm 134 in or adjacent the handle portion 136 and be coated with an insulative material to isolate electrical energy from a clinician. In embodiments, the return cable 70 is connected to the first arm 134 within the handle portion 136 such that the entire grasper portion 138 and the pivot 137 of the first arm 134 is in electrical communication with the return cable 70. In embodiments where the pivot portions 137, 147 are constructed of or coated with a conductive material, contact between the pivot portions 137, 147 places the pivot portion 147 and the grasper portion 148 of the second arm 144 in electrical communication with the return cable 70. The pivot pin 150 extends through and pivotably couples pivot portions 137, 147 and may be formed of or coated with a conductive material to place the pivot portions 137, 147 in electrical communication with one another. In particular embodiments, the return cable 70 is connected directly to each of the first and second arms 134, 144.

With additional reference to FIGS. 8 and 9, the return device 130 includes an opening/locking device 162 positioned between the first and second arms 134, 144. The opening/locking device 162 is in the form of a leaf spring having a first portion 164 adjacent the first arm 134, a second portion 166 adjacent the second arm 144, and a central portion 165 interconnecting the first and second portions 164, 166. The opening/locking device 162 has an operating configuration in which the opening/locking device 162 is configured to urge the first and second handle portions 136, 146 away from one another such that the grasping portions 138, 148 are also urged apart from one another. The opening/locking device 162 may also have a locked configuration in which the opening/locking device 162 is configured to fix the first and second handle portions 136, 146 and thus, the grasping portions 138, 148 in a fixed position relative to one another. The opening/locking device 162 may be electrically

isolated from the grasping portions 138, 148 of the first and second arms 134, 144 by the first and second handle portions 136, 146. The first and second portions 164, 166 extend towards the pivot pin 150 and are connected to one another by the central portion 165.

The first portion 164 defines a hole 163 that receives a first fastener 154. The first fastener 154 passes through the hole 163 to secure the first portion 164 to the first arm 134. The hole 163 is configured to complement the first fastener 154 such that first portion 164 is substantially fixed to the first arm 134 by the first fastener 154. The first fastener 154 may be threaded into the first arm 134 to secure the first portion 164 to the first arm 134. The first fastener 154 secures the first portion 164 to the first arm 134 and prevents the first portion 164 from translating longitudinally, transversely, or away from the first arm 134.

The second portion 166 defines a longitudinal slot 167 that receives the second fastener 156. The second fastener 156 passes through the slot 167 to secure the second portion 166 to the second arm 144. The longitudinal slot 167 is configured to receive the second fastener 156 such that the second portion 166 is configured to translate in a longitudinal direction along the second arm 144 as the first and second arms 134, 144 are moved towards and away from one another about the pivot 150. The second fastener 156 may be threaded into the second arm to secure the second portion 166 to the second arm 134. In the operating configuration, the second fastener 156 secures the second portion 166 to the second arm 144 such that the second portion 166 translates in a longitudinal direction along the second arm 144, e.g., towards and away from the pivot pin 150, as the first and second arms 134, 144 are pivoted relative to one another while preventing the second portion 166 from translating transversely or away from the second arm 144. In the locked configuration, the second fastener 156 is tightened such that the second portion 166 secures the second portion to the second arm 144 and prevents the second portion 166 from translating longitudinally, transversely, or away from the second arm 144.

As detailed above, the opening/locking device 162 may be used with the return device 130; however, the opening/locking device 162 may also be used with a plurality of other graspers or scissor type devices to selectively lock pivoting arms relative to one another and to bias the pivoting arms apart from one another.

While several embodiments of the disclosure have been shown in the drawings, it is not intended that the disclosure be limited thereto, as it is intended that the disclosure be as broad in scope as the art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. Any combination of the above embodiments is also envisioned and is within the scope of the appended claims. Therefore, the above description should not be construed as limiting, but merely as exemplifications of particular embodiments. Those skilled in the art will envision other modifications within the scope of the claims appended hereto.

What is claimed:

1. An electrosurgical system comprising:
 - an electrosurgical generator including an active terminal and a return terminal;
 - an electrosurgical instrument including an active electrode;
 - a return instrument including a return electrode;
 - an active plug configured to connect to the active terminal of the electrosurgical generator;

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- a return plug configured to connect to the return terminal of the electrosurgical generator to electrically couple the return electrode to the return terminal;
- an active cable extending from the return plug to the electrosurgical instrument, the active cable in electrical communication with the active electrode;
- a return cable extending from the return plug to the return instrument;
- a connector cable extending from the active plug to the return plug; and
- a mechanical switch mechanism disposed within the return plug, the mechanical switch mechanism having a disengaged position in which the active plug is electrically disconnected from the active cable and an engaged position in which the active plug is in electrical communication with the active cable.
2. The electrosurgical system according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical switch mechanism is in the disengaged position when the return plug is disconnected from the return terminal and is in the engaged position when the return plug is connected to the return terminal.
3. The electrosurgical system according to claim 1, wherein the mechanical switch mechanism includes a plunger translatable within the return plug, the plunger including a tip portion extending from a leading end of the return plug in the disengaged position and disposed within the return plug in the engaged position.
4. The electrosurgical system according to claim 3, wherein the tip portion is configured to engage the return terminal as the return plug is connected to the return terminal such that engagement between the tip portion and the return terminal transitions the mechanical switch mechanism from the disengaged position to the engaged position.
5. The electrosurgical system according to claim 3, wherein the return plug includes a post and the plunger includes a slot defined therethrough, the post received within the slot to limit translation of the plunger towards and away from the leading end of the return plug.
6. The electrosurgical system according to claim 3, wherein the return plug defines a plunger channel, the plunger slidably received within the plunger channel.
7. The electrosurgical system according to claim 6, wherein the mechanical switch mechanism includes a biasing member disposed within the plunger channel and engaged with the plunger to urge the plunger towards the leading end of the return plug.
8. The electrosurgical system according to claim 6, wherein the mechanical switch mechanism includes a bar conductor extending across the plunger channel, the bar conductor electrically coupled to the active cable.
9. The electrosurgical system according to claim 8, wherein the bar conductor is a leaf spring.
10. The electrosurgical system according to claim 8, wherein the plunger includes a protrusion having a contact on a surface facing a trailing end of the return plug, the contact spaced apart from the bar conductor in the disengaged position and in contact with the bar conductor in the engaged position.
11. The electrosurgical system according to claim 10, wherein in the engaged position, engagement between the contact and the bar conductor bends the bar conductor towards the trailing end of the return plug.
12. The electrosurgical system according to claim 10, wherein the active plug includes an active lead that extends

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- into the return plug and is coupled to the plunger such that the active lead is in electrical communication with the contact.
13. The electrosurgical system according to claim 12, wherein the active lead is connected to a leading surface of the protrusion opposite the contact.
14. A return plug for an electrosurgical system, the return plug comprising:
- a mechanical switch mechanism for mechanically connecting an active lead configured to electrically connect to an active terminal of an electrosurgical generator to an active cable configured to electrically connect to an active electrode of an electrosurgical instrument when the return plug is connected to a return terminal of the electrosurgical generator and to electrically disconnect the active lead from the active cable when the return plug is not connected to the return terminal; and
- an upper housing and a lower housing defining a pair of return channels and a plunger channel defined between the pair of return channels, each of the return channels extending through a leading end and a trailing end of the upper and lower housings.
15. The return plug according to claim 14, wherein the mechanical switch mechanism includes a plunger slidably disposed within the plunger channel, the plunger including a slot defined therethrough configured to allow translation of the plunger between a first position in which the active lead is electrically disconnected from the active cable and a second position in which the active lead is electrically connected to the active cable.
16. The return plug according to claim 15, wherein the plunger is biased towards the first position.
17. An electrosurgical system comprising:
- a first electrosurgical device;
- a second electrosurgical device;
- a first plug;
- a second plug;
- a first cable extending from the second plug to the first electrosurgical device;
- a second cable extending from the second plug to the second electrosurgical device;
- a connector cable extending from the first plug to the second plug; and
- a switch mechanism disposed within the second plug, the switch mechanism having a first condition in which the first plug is electrically disconnected from the first cable and a second condition in which the first plug is in electrical communication with the first cable.
18. The electrosurgical system according to claim 17, wherein one of the first electrosurgical device or the second electrosurgical device is configured to conduct electrosurgical energy having a first electrical potential to tissue and wherein the other of the first electrosurgical device or the second electrosurgical device is configured to collect electrosurgical energy having a different electrical potential conducted through tissue.
19. The electrosurgical system according to claim 17, wherein the switch mechanism includes a mechanical switch component movable between a first position, corresponding to the first condition, and a second position, corresponding to the second condition.